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ABSTRACT

The purpose of evaluating the orientation program at the University of Texas at Austin was to provide information which would aid the orientation unit in the Office of the Dean of Students in establishing new programs and revising programs already in existence. In the summer of 1974, a total of 4,550 students participated in the survey, which involved completing a questionnaire requesting information about students' concerns and personal philosophies of education. The sample was half male and half female, with 9% non-White minority students. Major findings showed that: (1) students most frequently checked 'job possibilities' as a major concern, followed by 'finding relevant courses'; (2) transfer students were less worried than freshmen about their scholastic abilities and the transition to college; (3) Mexican-American and Black students were twice as likely to check finances as a problem as Anglos; (4) transfer students were more concerned about finances than freshmen; (5) half of the students had a social philosophy towards college, while 20% had a vocational or academic philosophy respectively, and, (6) Blacks more frequently checked the vocational philosophy than other students. The major conclusion was that outreach programs were needed for new students with emphasis on responding to student career and social concerns, and the financial concerns of minority students. (Author)

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ORIENTATION: NEW STUDENT SURVEY SUMMER 1974

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Ongoing efforts to improve orientation programs and student services at The University of Texas at Austin have revolved around formal and informal evaluations during the past years. The present survey was undertaken to provide information which would aid the orientation unit in the Office of the Dean of Students in establishing new programs and revising programs already in existence. Through the identification of the various new student subgroups and their concerns, the orientation unit should be more able to effectively plan and evaluate program efforts.

The five general areas of investigation in this evaluation were:

1. What are the overall concerns of new students and what are the causes of their initial stress?
2. What is the philosophical orientation to education of entering students?
3. Are there any differences in the concerns of students according to ethnicity, sex, and entering status?
4. What implications are revealed for the orientation programs and the new student concerns and philosophies?
5. What do the results imply for other agencies and student affairs?

Method

Instrument

The new student questionnaire was developed in 1973 with the assistance of Dr. Paul G. Liberty of the Measurement and Evaluation Center at The University of Texas at Austin. It was first administered that year to the incoming freshmen and transfer students who attended the Summer Orientation Program at U.T. Austin. The questionnaire included demographic information, a list of thirty-eight concerns, and four philosophical orientations for the student's consideration. The philosophical orientations were taken from Trows Topologies. The original list of thirty-eight concerns of new students was identified by the Arts and Sciences Nonacademic Withdrawal Research Report and personal contacts with students during orientation.

The revised questionnaire used for the present investigation reduced the thirty-eight identified student concerns to seventeen, added a section to investigate the previous educational experiences of transfer students, and expanded the rating scale used in identifying the concerns of students. The use of the student's social security number on the questionnaire permitted the investigators to obtain from permanent record files data on the student's sex, ethnicity, classification, and high school percentile rank. A copy of the survey accompanies this report as an appendix.

Participants

Somewhat less than half (43%) of the 10,367 students who entered U.T. Austin in 1974 participated in the survey. Of the 4,550 participants, there were an approximately equal number of males (n=2,290) and females (n=2,260). Ethnicity was represented as follows: 3,934 (91%) Anglo, 251 (6%) Mexican American, 69 (2%) Black, and 61 (1%) other. Not

all of the 4,550 participants in the orientation program completed this survey. More than three-fourths (79%) were freshmen; the remainder (21%) were transfer students. Over two-thirds (69%) graduated in the upper quarter of their high school class. One-fourth (26%) graduated in the second quarter. While there were an equal number of males and females in the Anglo group, there were considerably more Black females than Black males (61% and 39%, respectively) and more Mexican American males than Mexican American females (61% and 39%, respectively). The ratio of transfers to freshmen also varied when analyzed by ethnicity. While 20% of the Anglos were transfers, 7% of the Blacks and 30% of the Mexican Americans were transfer students. The Black students appeared to have the highest overall high school percentile rank. Eighty-three percent of the Blacks graduated in the first quarter of their high school classes, while 68% of the Anglos and 71% of the Mexican Americans graduated in the top quarter of their high school classes. Additional demographic information regarding this sample is found in the appendix.

Procedure

The New Student Survey for 1974 was administered in each of the eight Summer Orientation Sessions held at U.T. Austin in 1974. To reach as large a group as possible, the questionnaire was distributed during the student's first required meeting, "Orientation to Orientation." Directions were given on the questionnaire, and responses were recorded on a general computer coding form. The students were identified by social security number only; confidential institutional use of the information was assured.

For the present report only descriptive statistical analyses were undertaken. The number and percentages of students responding to each

item on the questionnaire are presented in the tables to follow according to ethnicity, sex, and classification (i.e., freshman or transfer), as well as for the entire group of respondents. Because not all students responded to each question, the total "Ns" may vary from one item to another. Percentages should be interpreted as the percentage of those for whom data were available.

Results

On the basis of student responses to the New Student Survey, the following summary statements can be made about the overall concerns of philosophical orientation of the new students who attended orientation in 1974.

Student Concerns

Data showing the important concerns of students by ethnic group, sex, and classification are presented in Table 1. The greatest concern of the respondents, both freshman and transfer students, was "job possibilities after graduation." On a scale of 1 to 5, where one is "yes definitely" and five is "no definitely," over two-thirds (69%) of the freshmen, as well as the same percentage of transfers, rated this response a one or two. Other major concerns of the incoming students were: "finding relevant courses," "choosing a career," "getting to know people," and "choosing the right major." The response "job possibilities after graduation" was the greatest concern in all three ethnic groups. The most significant difference among ethnic groups occurred on the response "financial difficulty." While only 24% of the Anglo group indicated that this item was a concern, 66% of the Mexican American group and 58% of the Black group said that financial difficulty was definitely a concern. Other major concerns for all three ethnic groups were "choosing the right major" and "finding relevant

courses." No significant differences were found when the concerns were analyzed according to the sex of the respondents.

While freshmen and transfer students agreed on the major concerns, the transfer students were, not unexpectedly, less concerned with "making the transition to college" and "uncertainty about scholastic ability." The transfer students were, however, more concerned with "financial difficulty" than were the freshmen.

Philosophical Orientation

Table II presents the student's personal philosophy of higher education by ethnic group, sex, and classification. Of the four philosophical orientations, over half (53%) other respondents indicated that the "social" philosophy (response C) came closest to representing their own philosophy of higher education. The "vocational" philosophy (response A) was selected by 22% of the respondents; the "scholarly" philosophy (response B) was chosen by 20%; only 5% chose the radical philosophy (response D). When the preferred philosophies were compared by ethnicity, it was found that the percentages of Mexican American and Anglo students choosing a particular philosophy was approximately equivalent. The Black students, however, differed from the other two groups in their preferences. The Black students chose the "vocational" philosophy at a rate nearly double that of the Mexican American students.

When the philosophies of males and females were compared, the females were found to be somewhat socially and less vocationally or scholarly, oriented.

Freshmen were more inclined to favor the social aspects of college life than were the transfer students. The transfer students were more oriented toward the vocational and scholarly philosophies of education.

Percentages of New Students showing concerns By Total Group, Ethnicity, Sex, & Classification

Concern and Response	Total	Ethnic Group: Mexican American	Black	Anglo	Sex: Male	Female	Classification: Freshman	Transfer
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Financial difficulties (n=3911)								
1. yes definitely	16	41	50	13	16	16	14	21
2.	12	17	16	11	13	11	11	15
3.	20	14	16	20	21	19	21	19
4.	19	12	8	20	19	19	20	16
5. no definitely	33	15	8	35	31	34	34	29
Poor Grades (n=3928)								
1. yes definitely	22	13	21	22	23	21	23	19
2.	8	8	8	8	9	8	8	7
3.	14	17	14	14	15	14	14	13
4.	17	15	22	16	16	17	17	16
5. no definitely	38	25	34	39	37	41	37	44
Size of Campus (n=3948)								
1. yes definitely	9	22	10	9	8	10	9	10
2.	13	17	10	13	12	14	13	13
3.	31	22	32	31	30	31	30	33
4.	19	18	30	19	19	19	19	18
5. no definitely	27	20	28	28	30	25	28	26
Impersonal Treatment (n=3937)								
1. yes definitely	17	23	14	17	16	18	19	16
2.	19	20	19	18	17	20	20	19
3.	30	23	24	30	30	30	31	25
4.	16	18	18	15	16	16	15	17
5. no definitely	21	15	24	21	23	18	20	23
Making Transitions to College (n=3936)								
1. yes definitely	16	23	20	15	15	16	17	9
2.	17	23	15	17	15	18	20	7
3.	34	30	27	34	36	33	35	30
4.	18	7	16	18	18	18	17	20
5. no definitely	25	17	22	25	26	24	20	44
Getting to Know People (n=3930)								
1. yes definitely	21	17	11	9	17	25	21	20
2.	20	21	17	13	20	20	18	20
3.	19	19	27	24	21	17	19	17
4.	13	26	20	23	14	12	13	13
5. no definitely	17	17	23	32	18	17	17	18
Uncertain About Scholastic Ability (n=3926)								
1. yes definitely	9	17	11	9	9	10	10	7
2.	13	21	17	13	12	14	13	11
3.	23	19	27	24	23	24	24	23
4.	23	26	25	23	22	23	22	23
5. no definitely	32	17	23	32	34	29	30	36
Choosing A Career (n=3942)								
1. yes definitely	35	31	34	35	34	35	35	34
2.	17	24	15	17	16	17	17	15
3.	17	8	18	17	16	17	17	14
4.	12	8	10	13	12	13	13	13
5. no definitely	19	29	31	18	20	18	17	24
Finding relevant courses (n=3933)								
1. yes definitely	35	46	32	35	32	39	34	38
2.	22	20	20	22	23	21	23	19
3.	19	15	17	19	21	18	20	17
4.	11	6	18	11	11	11	11	11
5. no definitely	13	8	13	13	13	11	11	15
Size of classes (n=3936)								
1. yes definitely	18	20	19	18	18	19	18	19
2.	23	27	23	23	23	23	23	21
3.	38	37	26	39	38	39	39	35
4.	15	9	15	16	14	16	15	16
5. no definitely	15	19	16	14	14	13	14	10
Choosing the right major (n=3911)								
1. yes definitely	43	57	42	43	48	47	44	39
2.	17	10	15	18	18	16	18	14
3.	14	9	19	14	16	13	15	13
4.	9	7	8	10	10	9	9	10
5. no definitely	13	14	16	15	15	15	13	23
Relationship with the opposite sex (n=3932)								
1. yes definitely	23	15	15	24	20	27	23	23
2.	19	15	20	19	19	19	19	17
3.	34	34	23	34	32	35	34	34
4.	11	8	18	11	10	13	12	11
5. no definitely	23	27	25	22	20	25	12	25
Adjustments to living arrangements (n=3937)								
1. yes definitely	16	20	20	14	14	15	14	18
2.	19	15	23	18	17	20	18	20
3.	25	34	24	25	25	23	26	23
4.	16	15	11	16	15	16	14	13
5. no definitely	24	14	23	24	24	25	24	25
Relationships with roommates (n=3927)								
1. yes definitely	21	24	23	21	18	25	22	20
2.	19	10	24	19	19	20	20	18
3.	20	29	19	20	22	18	20	19
4.	12	14	10	12	13	11	12	12
5. no definitely	27	12	24	28	28	26	27	31
Involvement in social activities (n=3940)								
1. yes definitely	15	13	16	16	13	18	15	14
2.	22	29	20	21	22	21	22	22
3.	30	29	35	29	33	28	33	29
4.	15	12	10	15	15	14	15	15
5. no definitely	17	8	15	17	17	17	17	19
Forming relationships with persons of different cultural backgrounds (n=3925)								
1. yes definitely	12	22	21	10	10	13	11	11
2.	16	21	24	15	15	17	16	16
3.	22	25	21	23	23	22	22	23
4.	18	7	13	19	18	18	18	20
5. no definitely	32	15	19	23	24	20	23	21
Job possibilities after graduation (n=3925)								
1. yes definitely	51	54	58	51	50	52	50	56
2.	18	14	15	18	18	18	18	17
3.	14	18	11	14	14	13	14	13
4.	7	3	4	6	7	6	8	5
5. no definitely	10	8	10	10	10	9	10	9

TABLE 2

Percentages of New Students Checking Educational Orientation by Total Groups, Ethnicity, Sex, and Classification

Educational Orientation	Total Group		Ethnic Group						Sex				Classification			
			Black		Mexican-Amer.		Anglo		Male		Female		Freshman		Transfer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Vocational	834	22	24	44	57	27	709	22	491	26	343	18	616	21	200	26
Scholarly	759	20	9	16	44	21	649	20	395	21	364	19	548	19	177	23
Social	1989	53	22	40	100	47	1765	54	892	48	1097	58	1591	55	348	45
Radical	171	5	-	-	11	5	141	4	92	5	79	4	120	4	38	5
Total	3753	100%	55	100	212	100	3264	100	1870	100	1883	99[a]	2875	99	763	99

[a] values vary from 100 due to rounding error.

Summary

The New Student Survey of 1974 reveals that the major concerns of entering students are primarily vocational and academic. The similarities in concerns are much more pronounced than the differences. The concerns seldom varied when data were analyzed according to ethnicity, sex and classification. The only significant difference was that the Mexican American and Black students were much more concerned about financial difficulties than were Anglo students. This difference could possibly be attributed to the fact that a larger percentage of the Blacks and Mexican Americans come from lower income levels than Anglo students. Additional support for the ethnic difference in concerns about financial difficulties is found in the responses to the demographic data about sources of financial aid and parental education as well as the fact that a large portion of the minority students attending orientation received full financial grants to attend.

The second major area of concern was social in nature. The finding that the social philosophy was the personal philosophy most frequently chosen by these entering students also lends support to the significance of the concern.

The responses to the philosophies were also similar in most cases when analyzed according to sex, ethnicity and classification. The only noticeable difference was that Black students more frequently than Anglo and Mexican American students preferred the vocational philosophy.

Because there were considerably fewer Black students than Mexican American and Anglo students, and there were no Black transfer students, the interpretation of the data in comparison to ethnicity are cautioned.

The concerns of the new students in 1973 and 1974 were essentially the same; thus there is evidence to support programmatic changes based on these concerns.

Recommendations for the Orientation Program

1. Results of the New Student Survey 1974 should be incorporated in the future planning of orientation.
2. Financial aid programs in summer Orientation should be reviewed and revised in order to reduce the concerns of minority students.
3. Career planning and placement information should be increased and included as part of the total advising process. This information should be more job-oriented in order to assist the student in determining viable, realistic career options.
4. Campus resources should be emphasized and utilized so that entering students can alleviate some of their initial concerns.
5. Orientation advisors should be trained to incorporate an awareness of the concerns of entering students.
6. Counseling Center programs in the summer Orientation should be directed towards alleviating academic, vocational and social concerns, and helping with the anxieties inherent in career decisions.
7. Follow-up programs on these concerns should be planned in order to maximize the utilization of resources available to students.
8. Orientation programs should continue to provide information on extracurricular activities and organizations.

9. The social aspects of campus life should be presented in a program that offers methods of defining and balancing an appropriate social/educational balance for the individual.

Implications

1. There is a need for other student service agencies to review the data and incorporate the results in their future planning to enhance programmatic and cooperative efforts.
2. There is a need for outreach programs focusing on new student concerns.
3. There is a need for more creative publicity and dissemination of information about existing programs and resources.
4. There is a need for cooperative efforts for interagency programming.
5. There is a need for student affairs agencies to join in an informal discussion of the implications of the concerns data.

APPENDIX

Results of Population Demographic Data

Three-fourths (74%) of the new students attending the 1974 orientation program graduated from high schools with a graduating class of more than 300. A significantly larger percentage of Anglos than Blacks and Mexican Americans graduated from schools having more than 500 in the graduating class (49%, 2%, and 31%, respectively).

More than half (61%) of the students' mothers had a college background, while only 7% failed to complete high school. A breakdown of the students' mothers' education by ethnicity revealed that the mothers of the Mexican American students were much less apt to have had a college background, than were the mothers of Anglo and Black students (15%, 65%, and 52%, respectively). Responses on this item for freshmen and transfers were approximately equivalent.

Almost three-fourths (74%) of the students' fathers had some college, while 10% failed to complete high school. As with the mothers' education, significant differences were found between the ethnic groups. Over three-fourths (78%) of the Anglo students' fathers had a college background; almost half (49%) of the Black students' fathers had a college background; about one-fifth (21%) of the Mexican American students' fathers attended college. Somewhat more freshmen than transfer students had fathers with college experience (77% and 63%, respectively). Over three-fourths (77%) of the respondents entered U.T. Austin directly from high school. One-fifth (21%) were transfers. Over four-fifths (81%) indicated that U.T. Austin was their first choice of colleges. Breakdowns by ethnicity showed that U.T. was the first choice for a larger percentage of Anglo and Mexican American students, than for the Black students. While 83% of the Anglos and 76% of the Mexican Americans

responded positively to this item, only 59% of the Black students did so. There was also a variance in the responses of freshman and transfer students. Somewhat less than two-thirds (63%) of the transfer students and considerably more than four-fifths (86%) of the freshmen responded that U.T. Austin was their first choice of college.

Almost half (47%) of the total group indicated that they planned to live in University-owned residence halls; one-fourth (24%) said that they planned to live in a privately-owned dormitory. A greater majority of the Black students (82%) planned to live in University-owned residence halls than did Anglo students (46%) or Mexican American students (56%). While about half (52%) of the freshmen planned to live in University-owned residence halls, apartment living was most often chosen by the transfer student (45%).

For three-fourths (75%) of the total group of respondents, the family was the most important source of financial aid. When analyzed by ethnicity, it was found that 80% of the Anglo students listed the family as the most important source of financial aid, while only 30% of the Black students and 21% of the Mexican American students chose this response. Sixty percent of the transfer students listed the family as the most important source of financial aid. Over half (57%) of the Black students and one-fourth (25%) of the Mexican American students listed a scholarship as the most important source of financial aid. However, more than one-fourth (29%) of the Mexican Americans listed a grant as the most important source of financial aid.

Analysis of the special section related to the previous educational experiences of transfer students revealed that a significant majority (78%) had attended only one college or university prior to enrolling at

The University of Texas at Austin. Most (88%) of them had attended an in-state institution prior to enrollment at U.T. Nearly half (49%) had attended a private junior college; almost one-third (32%) had attended a public four-year college. Approximately one-third (31%) attended the previous institution for two semesters, while slightly more (39%) attended for four semesters.

Percentage Responses to the Demographic Data by Total Response, Ethnicity, & Classification

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	TOTAL RESPONSE N	TOTAL RESPONSE %	ETHNIC GROUP Anglo %	ETHNIC GROUP Black %	ETHNIC GROUP Mexican-Amer. %	CLASSIFICATION Transfers %	CLASSIFICATION Freshmen %
Sex							
Males	2290	50	50	39	61	53	51
Females	2260	50	50	61	39	47	49
Ethnicity							
Anglo	3904	91	100	-	-	89	93
Black	69	2	-	100	-	-	2
Mexican American	251	1	-	-	100	10	5
Other	61	1	-	-	-	-	-
Classification							
Freshman	3569	79	80	93	64		
Transfer	947	21	20	7	36		
High School rank							
1st quarter	3065	69	68	83	71	64	70
2nd quarter	1162	26	27	16	24	29	26
3r4 quarter	196	4	5	1	5	7	4
4th quarter	15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Size of graduating class							
Under 50	113	3	3	5	5		
50-100	282	7	7	27	11		
101-300	648	16	16	28	20		
301-500	993	25	25	38	33		
Over 500	1925	49	49	2	31		
Mother's education (highest level)							
Grammar school (1-8 years)	131	3	1	7	39	6	3
High School diploma	173	4	4	12	14	34	30
High school (9-12 years)	1211	31	30	30	31	5	4
College (1-4 years-no degree)	1162	29	31	20	10	29	29
College (Bachelor's degree)	974	25	27	13	2	19	26
College (Master's degree)	235	6	6	17	3	5	6
College (Doctorate-Ph.D.)	18	-	-	2	-	-	-
College (Professional degree)	51	1	1	-	-	(11n) 1	(38n) 1
Father's education (highest level)							
Grammar school (1-8 years)	199	5	3	7	40	10	4
High school diploma	197	5	4	9	17	8	4
High school (9-12 years)	612	16	15	24	20	20	14
College (1-4 years-no degree)	724	18	19	24	10	20	18
College (Bachelor's degree)	1191	30	32	9	7	24	32
College (Master's degree)	455	12	12	14	4	9	12
College (Doctorate-Ph.D.)	123	3	3	2	-	2	3
College (Professional degree)	439	11	12	-	-	(64n) 8	12
U.T. Austin first choice							
Yes	3231	81	83	59	76	63	86
No	724	18	17	39	24	36	13
Most Important source of finan.aid							
Family	2995	75	80	30	21	60	80
Own savings	320	8	8	-	7	15	6
Employment	147	4	4	-	5	9	2
Scholarship	170	4	2	57	25	2	5
Grant	134	3	2	7	29	4	3
Loan	122	3	3	7	10	6	2
Other	78	2	2	-	3	4	1
Type of residence plan to live in							
University dorm	1873	81	46	82	56	28	52
Private dorm	965	24	26	7	5	14	27
Apartment	591	15	15	-	21	45	7
Parent's or relatives home	319	8	8	8	9	3	9
Rent/own home	91	2	2	-	2	6	1
Fraternity or sorority	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cooperative	44	1	-	-	2	-	1
Rooming house	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	60	2	1	3	4	3	1

TRANSFER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DATA	Student	
	Number	%
No. of colleges/univer. attended prior to U.T.		
One	606	78
Two	138	18
Three	28	-
Four	3	-
Five or more	-	-
Last institution		
In-state	685	88
Out-of-state	89	11
Institution last attended		
Public junior college	378	49
Private junior college	27	3
Four year public college	247	32
Four year private college	111	14
Other	9	1
No. of semesters enrolled at last institution		
One	51	7
Two	235	31
Three	62	8
Four	295	39
Five	56	7
Six	38	5
Seven	12	2
Eight	8	1
Nine	8	1